

North Chicago, IL- Congressman Mark Kirk (R-Highland Park) announced Tuesday the awarding of a \$13 million contract to Plata/Mota of Chicago for upgrades to the North Chicago Veterans Administration Medical Center. Joining Kirk for the announcement was U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Gary Jones- Commander Naval Service Training Command & Navy Region Midwest, U.S. Navy Captain Michael Anderson- Commanding Officer Naval Hospital Great Lakes and North Chicago Veterans Administration Medical Center Director Patrick Sullivan. The surgery and ER renovation project will begin in early 2005 and will provide new operating rooms and a substantially expanded emergency department. Completion of the work is targeted for June 2006.

“No where else in the country is there such a relationship between the VA and the Navy,” said Kirk. “This joint venture will mean VA and Navy personnel will be working together to provide the best quality care to veterans, as well as active duty and their dependents.”

This is the second phase of the joint venture plans between North Chicago Veterans Administration Medical Center and Naval Hospital Great Lakes. When completed, there will be four new operating rooms with recovery room beds and the emergency department will have 14 new exam rooms. All of Navy’s inpatient medicine, surgery and emergency room services will be shifted to the VA once the work is finished. The first phase was accomplished in October 2003, when Navy shifted its inpatient mental health to the VA.

This project is part of the overall plan to provide a \$160 million ambulatory care center adjacent to the VA that will care for veterans, active duty personnel, dependents and military retirees.

“Our two federal institutions will become a model for excellent health care at reduced taxpayer expense,” said Kirk. “Cooperation between the Navy and VA ensures the survival of veterans’ health care in Northern Illinois while upgrading the care received by our navy recruits.”

Other Navy/VA joint sharing projects include building a \$1.3 million state-of-the-art Women’s Health Clinic that will provide comprehensive health care for women, as well as opportunities for research and provider education. For the first time ever in a VA, pediatric care will also be provided for Navy dependents.

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